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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: priority theme: poverty eradication

Statement submitted by American Cancer Society, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.5/2011/1.

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Statement*

1. The American Cancer Society is a leader in the global cancer control movement, addressing the growing global cancer and tobacco burden through a variety of programmes and initiatives throughout the world, including Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. The mission of the American Cancer Society is to eliminate cancer as a major health problem by preventing cancer, saving lives and diminishing suffering from cancer. The American Cancer Society is a non-governmental organization partner of the Non-Communicable Disease Alliance, the group formed by the International Federations (Union for International Cancer Control, International Diabetes Federation, World Heart Federation, International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease) representing the four main diseases outlined in the World Health Organization 2008-2013 Non-communicable Diseases Action Plan of the Global Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases.

2. The American Cancer Society,

Acknowledging that:

- Health, poverty eradication and social development are accorded a key role in the Millennium Development Goals and other international policies.
- The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (2002):
  - Includes among its central themes the provision of health care, support and social protection for older persons, including preventive and rehabilitative health care;
  - Identifies advancing health and well-being into old age as one of three priority directions in its recommendations for action, affirming that:
    - For both humanitarian and economic reasons, it is necessary to provide older persons with the same access to preventive and curative care and rehabilitation as other groups.
    - An epidemiological transition is now under way in all regions of the world, indicating a shift in predominance of infectious and parasitic diseases to one of chronic and degenerative diseases. Many developing countries and countries with economies in transition are, however, confronting a double burden of fighting emerging and re-emerging communicable diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, in parallel with the increasing threat of non-communicable diseases.
- Its specific actions include:
  - Focusing on the major known risks arising from unhealthy diets, physical inactivity and other unhealthy behaviours, such as smoking and alcohol abuse, in health promotion, health education, prevention policies and information campaigns.
  - Taking comprehensive action to prevent the abuse of alcohol, to reduce the use of tobacco products and involuntary exposure to tobacco smoke in promoting the cessation of tobacco use at all ages.

* Issued without formal editing.

Considering that:

- Improved health care is a key pillar of global actions to combat poverty and promote social development.
- Death and disability from non-communicable diseases (cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and chronic respiratory disease) significantly hinder economic development and are a major threat to the global economy. Non-communicable diseases are not only a major cause of mortality but also a major cause of poverty and a barrier to economic development.
- Non-communicable diseases are responsible for 60 per cent of the world's deaths. Annually 8.1 million premature deaths from non-communicable diseases occur in low- and middle-income countries.
- Globally, non-communicable diseases deaths are projected to increase by 17 per cent in the next 10 years, and by 27 per cent in the African region.
- The inequitable burden on low- and middle-income countries will only be exacerbated in the future: projected non-communicable diseases burden growth will disproportionately affect poor and disadvantaged populations, thereby contributing to widening poverty gaps between and within countries.
- Cancer is a major burden on the world's poor and disproportionately affects the most vulnerable nations and populations. More than 50 per cent of cancer cases and over 70 per cent of all global cancer deaths occurring in low- and middle-income countries, where it claims over 5.3 million lives each year.
- In low- and middle-income countries, cancer is a significant contributor to the overall disease burden in adults. In low-income nations, the adult cancer burden is higher than other major public health concerns like malaria, tropical-cluster diseases, nutritional deficiencies, and diabetes. In middle-income nations the adult cancer burden is higher than that attributed to other major public health concerns, including HIV/AIDS, respiratory diseases, diarrhoeal diseases, tuberculosis, maternal conditions, and diabetes.
- The World Economic Forum (*Global Risks 2010: A Global Risk Network Report*) highlighted chronic diseases as one of the three greatest risks to the global economy — alongside fiscal crises and asset price collapse — based on a combination of likelihood and severity.
- Non-communicable diseases can have a devastating economic impact on families — through diminishing household income, out-of-pocket health-care expenses, impacting un-monetized labour, placing a hefty financial burden for care and indirect costs — with long-lasting effects on social networks and communities.
- Avoidable cancer-related morbidity and mortality exacts a considerable economic toll through impacting economic productivity and through the inefficient allocation of scarce health-care resources. According to a recent study on the global economic cost of cancer by the American Cancer Society and LIVESTRONG, cancer is the disease with the largest global financial impact. The study indicates that the financial impact of death and disability caused by cancer in 2008 — not including direct treatment costs — was $895 billion, the equivalent of 1.5 per cent of the global gross domestic product.

- Despite the epidemiological and economic significance of the cancer and the burden of other non-communicable diseases in the developing world and the existence of strategies to reduce incidence, morbidity, and mortality, there are major inequalities between and within nations in access to cancer control resources.

- At the heart of these grave inequalities is a lack of global political and financial commitment to cancer and non-communicable diseases. National and international funding to improve outcomes in low- and middle-income countries is negligible and fails to reflect the magnitude of the disease burden.

  - Despite being responsible for 60 per cent of the world's deaths, the proportion of overall global development assistance for health invested in non-communicable diseases is less than 3 per cent.

  - Only an estimated 5 per cent of global resources for cancer control are spent in low- and middle-income countries, which is completely out of line with the fact that low- and middle-income countries account for more than 50 per cent of cancer cases, over 70 per cent of cancer deaths, and 80 per cent of the disability-adjusted life-years lost to cancer.

  - The African region, for example, accounts for 0.2 per cent of global cancer medical costs, a little over 1 per cent of global spending on health, 6.4 per cent of new cancer cases, and 15 per cent of the global population.

- The global cancer burden is enmeshed within the cycle of poor health and poverty and represents an important impediment to diminishing poverty and ensuring sustainable economic development. Policies and financial support for the development and implementation of evidence-based, resource-appropriate cancer control strategies can reduce the significant social and economic impacts of the disease and play a crucial role in promoting the development of more efficient and sustainable health systems.

- The United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 64/265, calls for a high-level meeting on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (September 2011), offering an unparalleled opportunity to address these diseases and reduce their impact on the poor and ageing populations.

Calls for:

- The Commission for Social Development, Member States, and non-governmental organizations to incorporate and embrace non-communicable diseases control in the recommendations to eradicate poverty.

- Governments to prioritize addressing the non-communicable diseases burden in their national development and health programmes and ensure that the necessary political and financial commitments are made and sustained.

- Governments to recognize the unique social, economic, and health needs of ageing populations and implement the recommendations of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing regarding development and health.

- Governments to invest in health care that addresses the non-communicable diseases burden, encompassing the complete continuum of care, ranging from health promotion and disease prevention to the provision of primary health

care, acute care treatment, rehabilitation, community care for chronic health problems, and palliative care.

- Member States to ensure that their Heads of State or Government attend the General Assembly high-level meeting on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (September 2011), and ensure that the meeting integrates the needs of the poor and ageing populations.

- Member States to ensure the high-level meeting covers the full spectrum of issues raised by non-communicable diseases, including prevention, early detection, access to essential medicines and technologies, treatment and care and the health systems to deliver this in an equitable manner.

- The high-level meeting to offer all parties the opportunity to change the way these diseases, and their associated risk factors, are viewed and addressed around the world. We believe that at a minimum, the high-level meeting should conclude that:

  - Governments should be accountable and measured on non-communicable diseases plans.

  - The World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control should be fully implemented by all countries.

  - Member States should commit to prevent the preventable.

  - Increased resources are needed to deliver global non-communicable diseases interventions.

  - Non-communicable diseases need to be in the Millennium Development Goals successor goals.

  - A set of globally agreed approaches to non-communicable disease treatment and care is needed.